

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13

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INFO AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 11035

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, UK

SUBJECT: DRUG ABUSE IN WESTERN EUROPE (C-DI-6-50012)

REF: STATE 154951

1. THE BEST CURRENT ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF DAILY
CHRONIC USERS OF HEROIN OR OTHER OPIATES IN THE U.K.
IS BASED ON AN INDEX OF ADDICTS "COMING TO THE NOTICE OF
THE HOME OFFICE." THESE FIGURES ARE BASED ON SUBMISSIONS
BY MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS WHO, UNDER THE DANGEROUS DRUGS
(NOTIFICATION OF ADDICTS) REGULATIONS 1968, MUST INFORM
THE HOME OFFICE EACH TIME AN ADDICT SEEKS MEDICAL
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TREATMENT OR TO BE REGISTERED IN A TREATMENT PROGRAM.

NUMBER OF ADDICTS KNOWN TO HOME OFFICE AT END OF 1975 WAS 1954. ACCORDING TO HOME OFFICE SOURCES, A RECENT STUDY HAS SHOWN THAT THE AVERAGE ADDICT WAITS TWO YEARS BEFORE GOING TO A TREATMENT CENTER. ACCORDING TO THEIR FLOW STATISTICS, THERE MAY THUS BE AN ADDITIONAL ONE THOUSAND ADDICTS HOLDING IN THIS TWO YEAR TIME FRAME.

2. THERE IS AN OFFICIAL DRUG ABUSE AND TREATMENT PROGRAM UNDER THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE. OF THE 1954 ADDICTS, 320 ARE BEING TREATED WITH HEROIN; THE REMAINDER ARE ON METHADONE OR OTHER SUBSTITUTION PROGRAMS. THERE ARE ONE OR TWO PRIVATE HOSPITALS WHICH PROVIDE DRUG ABUSE TREATMENT. ACCORDING TO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICIALS, THERE ARE ONLY A "HANDFUL" OF ADDICTS INVOLVED IN THESE PROGRAMS. HEROIN MAINTENANCE IS NOT USED IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

3. IF ONE ACCEPTS THE HOME OFFICE FIGURE IN PARA 1, THE BEST CURRENT ESTIMATE OF THE PROBABLE NUMBER OF HEROIN OR OPIUM ADDICTS NOT CURRENTLY RECEIVING TREATMENT IS ONE THOUSAND. SOME LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, ESTIMATE AN ADDICT POPULATION OF UP TO TEN THOUSAND. THIS ESTIMATE IS BASED ON SEIZURE FIGURES. HOME OFFICE OFFICIALS DISAGREE. THEY FEEL THAT IF THERE WERE A LARGER ADDICT POPULATION, IT WOULD BE REFLECTED IN THE STATISTICS FOR OVERDOSE DEATHS. HOWEVER, IN 1971, OF THE 51 OVERDOSE DEATHS ONLY FOUR VICTIMS WERE NOT KNOWN TO THE HOME OFFICE. LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS ARGUE ON THE OTHER HAND THAT OVERDOSE DEATHS ARE NOT PROPERLY RECORDED EXCEPT AMONG THE REGISTERED ADDICTS, AND THAT FIGURES FOR MORE RECENT YEARS WOULD PROBABLY SHOW AN INCREASE IN OVERDOSE DEATHS AMONG PEOPLE NOT KNOWN TO THE HOME OFFICE.

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